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# The Assist

*Helping to Improve Access to and Progress in the General Curriculum*

June 2004

Volume 3, No. 5

## YEAR NUMBER THREE COMPLETED

Dear Readers,

Congratulations! Our third year of administering MI-Access statewide was a success. Each year the program improves as we gain more experience with it and learn from each other.

As always, I want to thank all of you who have helped us better understand the assessment materials and the administration process by completing our online surveys. If you have not yet shared your thoughts on Winter 2004, it is not too late. There are two related surveys still active on the MI-Access Web page: (1) the Winter 2004 Coordinator Feedback Survey, and (2) the Winter 2004 Assessment Administrator Feedback Survey. To complete the surveys, go to [www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access) and click on "Survey Information." Your input is critical as we begin preparing for next year.

Please note that results for Winter 2004 will arrive in three different shipments: (1) Phase 1 MI-Access results for Participation and Supported Independence will arrive first, (2) Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE results will arrive after cut scores are recommended by Michigan educators and approved by the Michigan State Board of Education, and (3) state results will arrive after districts

have the opportunity to "cleanup" their student demographic information (as they do with MEAP student demographics). In the future, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) anticipates that all MI-Access results will be shipped at the same time. (For more information on results, see the article entitled "Notes from the Contractor to MI-Access Coordinators.")

I would like to take this opportunity to again thank all of the districts that are participating in the MI-Access Phase 2.1 Item Tryouts. The tryout assessment window closes on June 4, and materials must be shipped back to BETA/TASA, the MI-Access contractor, by June 14, 2004. The data gathered from the tryout will help the MDE refine the assessments for the next phase of the assessment development process—pilot testing. (For more information on Phase 2.1 Item Tryouts, see the article entitled "Phase 2.1 MI-Access Moves From Tryouts to Pilot.")

This summer, the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program will forge ahead with many other MI-Access projects, including revising next year's training materials,

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## NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR TO MI-ACCESS COORDINATORS

Thank you again for your participation in Winter 2004 MI-Access. The assessments have been scanned and scored, and results will arrive in districts during the month of June. You will receive three separate mailings: 1) MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence results, 2) Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE results, and 3) state results for all MI-Access assessments.

### MI-Access District, School, and Classroom Reports

This year, there have been some improvements to the District Results Inventory to help you organize and distribute your materials. The following outline provides an overview of what to expect.

#### MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence Reports

*District MI-Access Coordinators will  
receive/distribute:*

1. A District Results Inventory, which lists the materials included in the shipment. The inventory should **be kept** by District MI-Access Coordinators and used to distribute results to schools. (New this year: The inventory specifies how many *Winter 2004 Handbooks* to distribute to each school.)
2. A District Results Folder, which contains district-level reports to **be kept** by District MI-Access Coordinators.
3. School Results Folders and Classroom Results Folders to **be distributed** to each School MI-Access Coordinator in the district.
4. *Winter 2004 MI-Access Handbooks*, one to **be kept** by the District MI-Access Coordinator and multiple copies to **be distributed** to each School MI-Access Coordinator.

*School MI-Access Coordinators  
will receive/distribute:*

1. School Results Folders, which contain school-level reports to **be**

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## YEAR NUMBER THREE COMPLETED

*continued from page 1*

preparing for the pilot of Phase 2.1 MI-Access (see page 8), revising the Coordinator and Assessment Administrator Manual, preparing new online learning programs (see page 10), and preparing for the Annual Fall MI-Access Coordinator Conferences (see page 11). By staying busy over the next three months, we hope to help everyone hit the ground running when school starts up next fall.

I hope you all enjoy your summer and find a little time for much deserved rest and relaxation!

Peggy Dutcher  
Coordinator, Assessment for  
Students with Disabilities Program  
dutcherp@mi.gov

### 2003/2004 State Board of Education Strategic Goal

Attain substantial and meaningful  
improvement in academic  
achievement for all students/children  
with primary emphasis  
on high priority schools and students.

Revised at the October 23, 2003  
Board Meeting



## NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR TO MI-ACCESS COORDINATORS

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**kept** by the School MI-Access Coordinator. They also contain *Individual Student Labels* and *Parent Reports* to be used and distributed as appropriate.

- Classroom Results Folders, which contain classroom-level reports to **be distributed** to each teacher who administered MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence assessments.
- Winter 2004 MI-Access Handbooks*, one to **be kept** by the School MI-Access Coordinator and multiple copies to **be distributed** to each teacher who administered MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence assessments.

### MI-Access Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE Reports

*District MI-Access Coordinators will receive/distribute:*

- A District Results Inventory, which lists the materials included in the shipment. The inventory should **be kept** by District MI-Access Coordinators and used to distribute results to schools.
- A District Results Folder, which contains district-level reports to **be kept** by District MI-Access Coordinators.
- School Results Folders and Classroom Results Folders to **be distributed** to each school in the district that administered Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE assessments.
- Multiple copies of the *Winter 2004 MI-Access Handbook* to **be distributed** to each school participating in Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE. (Note: The District Results Inventory specifies the number to distribute to each school.)
- Multiple copies of the addendum to the *Winter 2004 MI-Access*

*Handbook*, one to **be kept** by the District MI-Access Coordinator and multiple copies to **be distributed** to all School MI-Access Coordinators. (Note: The District Results Inventory includes the number to distribute to each school.) The addendum was prepared because standard setting had not yet taken place for Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE when the *Winter 2004 MI-Access Handbook* was printed.

*School MI-Access Coordinators will receive/distribute:*

- A School Results Folder, which contains school-level reports to **be kept** by the School MI-Access Coordinator. It also contains *Individual Student Labels* and *Parent Reports* to be used and distributed as appropriate.
- Classroom Results Folders, which contain classroom-level reports to **be distributed** to each teacher who administered Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE assessments.
- Multiple copies of the *Winter 2004 MI-Access Handbook* to **be distributed** to each teacher who administered Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE assessments.
- Multiple copies of the addendum to the *Winter 2004 MI-Access Handbook*, one copy to **be kept** by the School MI-Access Coordinator and multiple copies to **be distributed** to each teacher.

### MI-Access State Reports

As noted previously, state results will be sent at a later date. Additional time was needed to allow districts to perform their online demographic update—a necessary step in ensuring the accuracy of student data for No Child Left Behind reporting purposes. The update enables districts to correct inaccurate demographic information.

### If You Have Questions

The cover letters that are included with the classroom reports recommend that assessment administrators contact their School MI-Access Coordinators with questions. If School MI-Access Coordinators cannot answer them, they are advised to take their questions to their District MI-Access Coordinators. If District MI-Access Coordinators cannot answer the questions, they should call the Toll-free MI-Access Hotline at 1-888-382-4246, or send an e-mail message to [mi-access@tasa.com](mailto:mi-access@tasa.com). Our MI-Access staff stand ready to assist you.

### Looking Ahead

In August, the MI-Access Online System will be ready to accept orders for 2004/2005 MI-Access Training Materials. District MI-Access Coordinators also will have an opportunity at that time to update their district and school coordinator information in the online system. During the summer, District MI-Access Coordinators will receive e-mail messages with the exact dates for entering information.

Early in the fall, you also will be asked to use the online system to submit your projected student and teacher counts for Winter 2005 MI-Access Phase 1 Participation and Supported Independence and Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE assessments. This system worked very well last fall.

NOTE: The window for the Spring 2004 MI-Access Phase 2.1 Item Tryout closes June 4. Please be sure your materials are shipped to BETA/TASA no later than June 14, 2004.



## MAY THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN: USING MI-ACCESS RESULTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTION

By Stan Masters, Coordinator — Curriculum, Assessment, and  
School Improvement Lenawee ISD and District MI-Access Coordinator

District MI-Access Coordinators are responsible for delivering district and school results to a variety of audiences in a clear and timely manner. As the District MI-Access Coordinator for Lenawee ISD (as well as the ISD's Coordinator for Curriculum, Assessment, and School Improvement), I spend the summer months reviewing our local scores, copying reports for administrators and teachers, and filing original reports in our students' CA-60s. I also review MI-Access data with teachers to help prepare them for their early fall meetings with parents. As part of that review, I make sure that each teacher has a copy of each student's *Parent Report* so they know exactly what parents have seen at home.

One of the great qualities of MI-Access is the timeliness of the results. Receiving results quickly helps teachers use the data to inform their work and their school's educational programs. It goes beyond just reporting scores; it reveals how teachers can learn about their own programs.

In preparing this article, I talked with Marty Chapman—a classroom teacher of students with multiple impairments at Porter Education Center—about how she uses MI-Access assessment data to look for continuous improvement in her students and herself.

**STAN:** Marty, what do you look for when you receive your MI-Access results?

**MARTY:** When I receive my results, I look at both my classroom and individual student results. Since I already know how my students scored according to the "as expected," I look instead for patterns in the performance categories —

Surpassed, Attained, and Emerging Toward the Performance Standard. I know that MI-Access is one snapshot in my students' total assessment picture.

**STAN:** What do you think about when you explore these patterns?

**MARTY:** I look at my notes from the administration to consider the instructional strategies that I use in my classroom. For example, if a student has "Surpassed the Performance Standard" for a particular Performance Expectation, I may scaffold back the amount of modeling or environmental cues that I present to the student. The data show that the student can be more independent. If a student has "Attained the Performance Standard," I may continue to use current accommodations, but will consider when to begin scaffolding back cues on similar activities. If a student is "Emerging Toward the Performance Standard," then I consider how I could choose another activity from the *Addressing the Unique Educational Needs of Students with Disabilities* (AUEN) document for that student's level of independence and use classroom assessment to get another picture about the student's performance.

**STAN:** How does the MI-Access assessment data complement the other assessment data you gather for recording a student's progress toward his or her goals?

**MARTY:** The MI-Access assessment data help me answer questions about and refine my instruction. Am I teaching the meaningful concepts? How well am I delivering instruction for a particular student? MI-Access data also provide part of the history about my students' progress toward their goals and help me set high expectations for their growth.

## New Tool for School Improvement

If you need help with school improvement or just want to see if your school is on track, go to [www.mi.gov/cepi](http://www.mi.gov/cepi) and click on "MIPlan." MIPlan is a Web-based management system designed to help schools create, implement, and monitor school improvement plans. It was developed by (1) the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), (2) the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Field Services, (3) the Michigan North Central Association, and (4) MGT of America.

MIPlan is available to every public school building and public school academy (PSA). To access the system, building principals should contact their local district superintendents for a MIPlan user ID and password. (If you are the principal of a PSA, CEPI mailed you your user ID and password in December 2003.)

According to the CEPI Web page, this new continuous school improvement planning tool was designed to bring the critical planning components of people, resources, data, and information together in a single environment that produces data-driven, research-based, and goal-oriented decisions for improving student learning. Look for more information on MIPlan in upcoming issues of *The Assist*.

# Kurzweil 3000: Assistive Technology Worth Exploring

By: Dennis Haggerty, Senior Account Manager, JST, Inc.

One goal of *The Assist* is to provide readers with information on ways to help students with disabilities access and make progress in the general curriculum. One way to accomplish that is to share information on assistive technology that enables students to work more independently during instruction and assessment. Kurzweil 3000 is a computer program designed to do just that. It was recently demonstrated to the MDE and is now being considered for use in producing assessment CDs.

The article below describes the most recent version of Kurzweil 3000. Please note that it is not meant as an endorsement of the product by the MDE; it is simply intended to inform districts, schools, and teachers of the program's availability. If you are using other software or assistive and adaptive aids that you believe your colleagues should know about, please send information on them to Peggy Dutcher at [dutcherp@mi.gov](mailto:dutcherp@mi.gov). We can include descriptions in future issues of *The Assist*.



Kurzweil Educational Systems

Kurzweil 3000 is a reading, writing, and learning computer program designed to help students with learning difficulties work more independently. It does so by combining visual and auditory representations of text with decoding and reference tools, such as audible definitions, pronunciations, and spelling.

The program also includes

- numerous study skill tools to facilitate active learning (including bookmarks, virtual highlighters, sticky notes, and outlining);
- phonetic word prediction and new vocabulary list support to help students write with minimal teacher intervention; and
- integrated test-taking capabilities to provide greater opportunities for students to be tested independently (whether by a classroom worksheet or via high-stakes assessment).

With Kurzweil 3000, users can scan documents (e.g., textbooks, worksheets, tests, etc.) and convert the text in those documents into speech. They also can access and convert electronic files, such as Word documents and PDFs. Since the user selects the printed text or electronic files to read with Kurzweil 3000, the software is appropriate for use across the curriculum and for students of all ages, grades, and abilities.

A particularly valuable feature of Kurzweil 3000 is that it can be customized to individual learning styles. For example, users can

- select from among several different reading voices,
- adjust the speed at which a document is read, and
- choose the unit of text (e.g., word, sentence, paragraph, etc.) that is read at one time.

Additionally, when Kurzweil 3000 is used for test-taking (whether fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, true/false, short answer, or essay), teachers and test administrators can turn numerous software features on or off, depending on the nature of the assignment and the needs of individual students.

The newest release of Kurzweil 3000 (version 8.0) is now shipping. The ability to save files in MP3 format and picture dictionary support are among the new features that add to the software's already versatile text-to-voice features.

For additional information about Kurzweil 3000, please call Job Skill Technology, Inc., (JST) at 1-800-783-5780. JST can provide free trial copies of the software and conduct on-site presentations. Online demonstrations of Kurzweil 3000 are also available on the Kurzweil Educational System's Web site at [www.kurzweiledu.com](http://www.kurzweiledu.com).

## REMINDER:

In the past, the *Addressing the Unique Educational Needs of Students with Disabilities* (AUEN) documents were included with MI-Access Training Materials. This year (2004/2005), the AUEN documents **will not** be included with the training materials, but you can make copies of the ones you already have for training and assessment purposes.

## Check it out!

You will find more MI-Access information on the Michigan Department of Education web site [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde).



# The GLCEs Don't Apply to My Students – Wrong!

During statewide conferences held in March and April 2004, new, revised state Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) in English language arts and mathematics were presented to more than one thousand educators. While not intended to represent the richness of a curriculum, the GLCEs are a comprehensive set of kindergarten - grade 8 performance expectations, which will guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment in Michigan for years to come. The GLCEs also will serve as assessment "targets" for both MI-Access and MEAP development at the state level.

It is anticipated that over the next few months, local district curriculum committees—composed of general and special education professionals—will study these new grade level content expectations and align their own English language arts grade-level benchmarks to them. In response to the No Child Left Behind requirement that students be assessed in grades 3-8 and 11, the GLCEs also will be used by the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) to develop assessments and item specifications for the new grades 3-8 assessments in the content areas of English language arts and mathematics.

This is not the first version of the GLCEs. In fact, using a version previously posted on the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) Web site, the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program (ASDP) went through a process of "extending" them for Phase 2.1 students. The "extended" GLCEs align with the same content standards, but are written to reflect the various cognitive functioning levels of the MI-Access Phase 2.1 target population. Now, the ASDP will take its previously extended GLCEs, compare them with the new GLCEs, and make sure its assessments and item specifications are still in alignment and appropriate for Phase 2.1 students.

Next, the ASDP will use a similar process to extend the GLCEs for Phase 1 MI-Access students—those who are assessed with MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence assessments. By doing so, the Department can ensure that Michigan is in compliance with the IDEA requirement that ALL special education students have access to the general curriculum.

To help readers better understand the GLCEs and how they relate to the Phase 2.1 MI-Access English language arts and mathematics assessments, three separate but related pieces are included in this issue of *The Assist*: (1) edited excerpts from "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the GLCEs," (the full document can be downloaded from the MDE Web site at [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)), (2) a sidebar on mathematics GLCEs (see page 7), and (3) a sidebar on English language arts GLCEs (see page 8).

**Q: Define exactly what Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) are, how they connect to the *Michigan Curriculum Framework*, and what they replace or supplant.**

**A:** The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* called upon states to implement grade level assessments based on "rigorous academic standards" by the 2005/2006 school year. The GLCEs are Michigan's response to this mandate. They do not represent the entire richness of a curriculum, but do highlight that which is essential for all students to know and be able to do.

The GLCE documents are the third tier of the *Michigan Curriculum Framework* (1995) and will directly correlate to

items on grade-level MEAP and MI-Access assessments. While content standards and benchmarks define the broader curriculum expected to be taught and learned in Michigan schools, GLCEs are specific and clarify what it is that students are expected to know and do on grade-level assessments. At the local level, teacher-created instructional design will drive instruction. To assist in this, the MDE is currently sponsoring a process by which working groups of mathematics and English language arts educators are aligning the benchmarks with the GLCEs. It is expected that this work will be completed by June 2004 in order to assist districts in the development of appropriate professional development activities.

While the GLCEs are incorporated in most, if not all, of the grade-span (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) benchmarks, they do "stretch" us in many ways, setting expectations that may go beyond what is currently expected of students at each grade level.

**Q: What happens to the content standards and benchmarks in the *Michigan Curriculum Framework*?**

**A:** The *Michigan Curriculum Framework* (1995) provides a framework for designing, delivering, and assessing instruction at the local level with parameters for a broader scope and sequence of content learning. This will remain the model for local districts

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# The GLCEs Don't Apply to My Students – Wrong!

continued from page 6

to use as a guide toward the alignment of a standards-based curriculum, instruction aligned to benchmarks, assessment aligned to content expectations, and professional development to support teaching and learning.

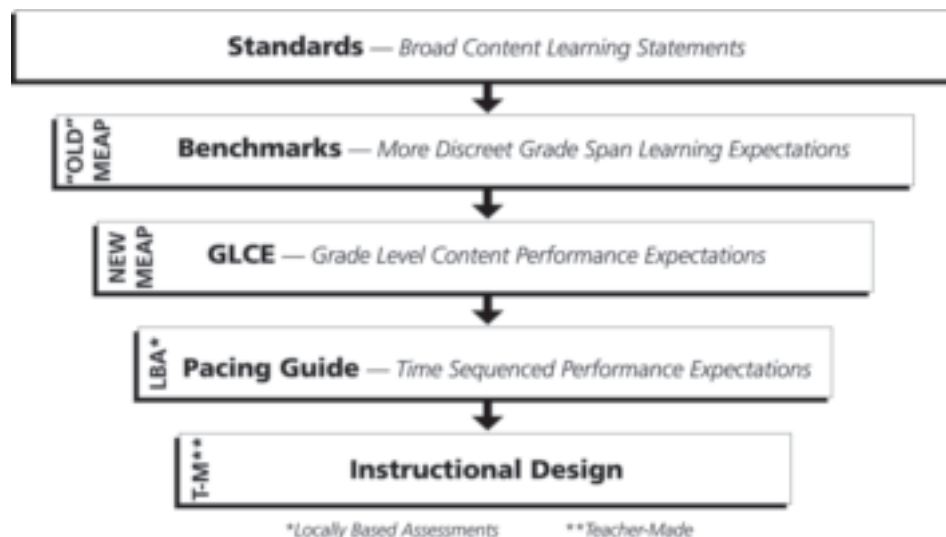
## Q: What was the rationale for the development of the GLCEs? Who was involved?

**A:** Our current *Michigan Curriculum Framework* standards in mathematics and English language arts were approved in 1995. The *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* of 2001 required states to develop grade-level assessments based on "high, rigorous academic standards." Since Michigan's benchmarks were designed by "grade-span" sequences, it required the development of "grade-specific" content expectations in order to drive the mandated grade-level assessments. Throughout the two years of their development, many professionals contributed to the GLCEs. Classroom teachers, curriculum specialists from local and intermediate school districts, academicians, and MDE staff have spent countless

hours identifying a set of learning expectations at each grade level.

## Q: What does this mean to our local curriculum processes?

**A:** The *Michigan Curriculum Framework* (1995) remains the basis for curriculum development at the local level. The GLCEs provide educators and administrators with a detailed set of expectations at each grade level. Many districts have already developed Pacing Guides where benchmarks were designated for specific grade levels and where expectations were identified for the purpose of developing locally-based assessments. Each local district will need to review its current designation of either grade-span or grade-specific benchmarks to find the alignment with the GLCEs. Over the next few years, districts will have an opportunity to incorporate the GLCEs into their own set of learning expectations as the GLCEs are folded into the MEAP and MI-Access assessment item development process. The following diagram provides an illustration of the structure of curriculum.



## More on the GLCEs: Mathematics

There are a number of materials related to Michigan's mathematics grade level content expectations (GLCEs) that can be found at the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) Web site ([www.mictm.org](http://www.mictm.org)). Following is a list of relevant materials, many of which were prepared for or presented at Mathematics Grade Level Content Expectations Workshops.

1. The Michigan State Board of Education-approved *Mathematics Grade Level Content Expectations* (in both "grade level" and "strand" formats).
2. The National Assessment of Educational Progress 2004 standards (draft).
3. The Third International Mathematics and Science Study standards.
4. Content expectations from a variety of instructional materials, including *Everyday Mathematics*, *Connected Mathematics Project*, and *Harcourt Mathematics*.
5. PowerPoint presentation from the MDE/MSU "Great Expectations, Grade Expectations" conferences (March 30 and April 19, 2004).
6. PowerPoint presentations from the MCTM "Grade Level Content Expectations Workshops" (April – June 2004).

## More on the GLCEs: English Language Arts

Continued from pages 6 and 7

Phase 2.1 special education students present a unique challenge for curriculum and assessment development. Because their learning rates are moderately to significantly slower than those of their age-level, general education peers, the English language arts GLCEs, as written, are inappropriate for them. The Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program (ASDP), therefore, has designed a process for “extending” the recently revised GLCEs so they are more appropriate for Phase 2 students.

First, the ASDP will bring together a team of educators with expertise in English language arts and the Phase 2.1 student population. Beginning with grade 3, these educators will examine the new kindergarten - grade 3 GLCEs and revise and expand the grade 3 statements to make them more appropriate for Phase 2.1 students. The advisory group will continue the extension process for grades 4-8.

Second, the team of experts will determine which extended GLCEs (or EGLCEs) are assessable at the state level.

Finally, the ASDP will work with the team to modify the *Proposed Phase 2.1 MI-Access Assessment Plan*, blueprint, and item specifications so that all state-assessable EGLCEs are either (1) addressed in the current Phase 2.1 assessments, or (2) designated for future state assessments.

At all stages, the team’s work will be reviewed and guided by special

education advisory committees and a comprehensive survey process.

Following are three examples of EGLCEs.

### Grade 3 Reading – Word Recognition and Word Study

**GLCE:** Students will use structural, semantic, and syntactic clues to automatically read frequently encountered words, decode unknown words, and decide meaning, including multiple meaning words.

**EGLCE:** Using picture clues, students will recognize a small number of frequently encountered, personally meaningful words in print.

### Grade 5 Reading – Narrative Text

**GLCE:** Students will analyze character traits and settings and how they define characters/plot, the role of dialogue, how problems are resolved, and the climax of a plot.

**EGLCE:** Students will identify and describe characters’ actions and motivations, setting (time and place), problem/solution, and sequence of events.

### Grade 8 Reading – Informational Text

**GLCE:** Students will analyze organizational patterns (e.g., theory, evidence, sequence).

**EGLCE:** Students will identify informational text patterns (e.g., problem/solution, sequence, compare/contrast, descriptive).

## Phase 2.1 MI-Access Moves From Tryouts to Pilot

Last fall, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE)—along with its Phase 2 MI-Access Content Advisory Committees and Sensitivity Review Committee—reviewed thousands of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics items for possible inclusion in the MI-Access Phase 2.1 Item Tryouts. Once all the items were reviewed, they were revised or dropped as needed. The remaining items were then incorporated into multiple Phase 2.1 MI-Access assessment booklets (or forms) and used this spring to assess Phase 2.1 students.

In June, the tryout assessment window closed and districts began the task of returning student answer documents to BETA/TASA—the MI-Access contractor—for scanning and scoring. Once that process is complete, BETA/TASA will prepare reports not only for districts, but also for another round of MDE and committee reviews.

In a process similar to that used last fall, the MDE will reconvene its Phase 2 Content Advisory Committees and its Sensitivity Review Committee, and ask members to examine the tryout data and feedback provided through the MI-Access Phase 2.1 Item Tryout Online Survey (available at [www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)). After a thorough review, participants will recommend items that should continue into the pilot phase of the assessment development process and items that should be dropped. The review meetings will take place July 20 and 21, 2004.

The items that remain after the summer meetings will be incorporated

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# MI-Access Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE Standard-Setting Meetings Are a Success

In April 2004, standard-setting meetings took place for MI-Access Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE. Standard setting is the process used to determine the criteria for calculating a student's performance in each of the content areas covered by the assessment.



The standard-setting process was conducted by BETA/TASA—the MI-Access contractor—and included more than 50 people, all of whom were nominated by their school districts to participate.

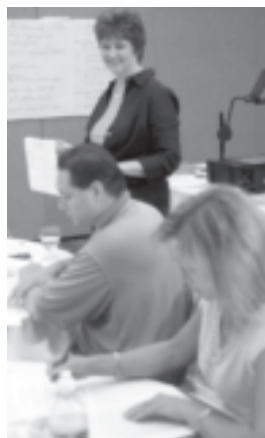
There was one overall standard-setting panel, which was divided into four subpanels—one for grade 4, one for grades 7 and 8, one for grade 11 English language arts (ELA), and one for grade 11 mathematics. The panel members included Michigan classroom teachers (special and general education), building-level administrators, parents, special education directors, school psychologists, and

teacher consultants. The charge to each of the subpanels was to recommend “cut scores” for each grade and content area to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The cuts divided either a 25-point (ELA) or a 43-point (mathematics) scale into three achievement categories—Surpassed, Attained, or

Emerging Toward the Performance Standard. These performance categories—which the subpanels further defined—are used on Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE reports to help explain students’ raw scores (or the number of questions they answered correctly out of 25 or 43).

Once the standard-setting process was complete, BETA/TASA took the judgments of each panelist and

calculated descriptive statistics—such as the mean, the median, and standard errors—for the recommended cut scores. These statistics were then presented to various MI-Access committees for review and feedback. The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability took the feedback from the committees, synthesized it, and made cut score recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction who, in turn, made recommendations to the State Board of Education for consideration and approval.



The approved cut scores appear on the Winter 2004 Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE reports and are described in greater detail in an addendum to the *Winter 2004 Handbook: How to Understand, Interpret, and Use MI-Access Results*. The MDE would like to thank all those who participated in the standard-setting process.

## Phase 2.1 MI-Access Moves From Tryouts to Pilot

*continued from page 8*

into multiple Phase 2.1 Item Pilot assessment booklets and administered in 2004/2005 to Phase 2.1 students.

“Piloting” assessment items is a critical step in the assessment development process, because it (1) allows the items to be further refined before statewide administration, (2) provides important feedback on how students respond to items, (3) provides feedback on the assessment administration process, (4) allows the MDE to examine and review assessment materials, and (5) shows the

types of information educators can gain from the assessment to help inform curriculum and instruction.

After the MI-Access Phase 2.1 Item Pilot, a similar committee review process will be used to review pilot data and feedback from the field. The items that make it through both tryout and pilot reviews will then be put into the MDE’s official MI-Access Phase 2.1 item bank. In the future, all items used on the statewide Phase 2.1 MI-Access assessments will be drawn from that bank.

### Assessment Development Checklist

- ☐ Develop assessment plan
- ☐ Field review of assessment plan
- ☐ Draft assessment items
- ☐ Committee review of assessment items
- ☐ Item tryouts
- ☐ Committee review of tryout results and feedback
- ☐ Pilot testing of assessment
- ☐ Committee review of pilot results and feedback
- ☐ Statewide implementation of Phase 2.1 MI-Access

## MORE ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMS COMING YOUR WAY

Based on the overwhelming success of the Interim Phase 2 BRIGANCE Online Learning Program, the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program (ASDP) is in the process of developing additional personnel development programs delivered via the Web. These programs will allow participants the option of receiving State Board of Education Continuing Education Units (SBE-CEU) or professional development that can be used when qualifying as a highly qualified teacher.

Next up is a program designed to help assessment administrators and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team members write better “as expected” for students taking part in MI-Access Participation assessments. At this time, a small group of Michigan educators and

personnel development experts are working on a program that not only will be informative, but also will give participants a chance to assess their knowledge and move to new levels.

In addition, the ASDP is exploring the possibility of developing an online learning program for Phase 1 MI-Access (Participation and Supported Independence). For years, Peggy Dutcher, Coordinator for ASDP, delivered full-day, face-to-face training sessions on how to conduct observations at the Annual Fall MI-Access Coordinator Conferences. These sessions were targeted at District MI-Access Coordinators and showed them how to use a training video and facilitator guide to train assessment

administrators in their home districts. The ASDP is exploring how that full-day training session might be trimmed down and turned into an online learning program for both assessment administrators and those conducting workshops on how to administer the MI-Access Participation and/or Supported Independence assessments.

Furthermore, the ASDP is exploring other potential online learning programs aimed at slightly different audiences, such as parents and IEP Team members. While these programs are further down the line, it appears that the Web may be the best way to reach them with high-quality, in-depth information—information that can only make MI-Access a stronger program.

## OSEP Visits the MDE

During the week of November 16, 2003, the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted a “verification visit” as part of the Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS). The system was developed to help ensure compliance with and improve student performance under Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). One purpose of the visit to Michigan was to review and get information about how the state is ensuring participation in and the reporting of student performance on statewide assessments as outlined in IDEA.

As part of the verification visit to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), the OSEP staff met with Dr. Jacques Thompson, Director of the

Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services, and members of the MDE’s staff who are responsible for the state’s various programs, including state assessment.

In looking at Michigan’s system for statewide assessment, OSEP collected information on a number of elements, including whether the state had

- established statewide assessment procedures that met the participation, alternate assessment, and reporting requirements of IDEA;
- established additional procedures that ensured the inclusion of all students (including those with disabilities) and provided appropriate accommodations;
- provided clear guidance and training to public agencies regarding the procedures and requirements;

- monitored local implementation of the procedures and requirements; and
- reported on the performance of children with disabilities on state assessments in a manner consistent with the requirements.

In order to better understand Michigan’s system for statewide assessment, OSEP also discussed with the MDE staff how its alternate assessments aligned with the state’s grade-appropriate content standards.

After the meeting was concluded, OSEP found that the MDE has a statewide assessment system that (1) ensures the participation of students with disabilities, and (2) is accountable for improving the performance of those students.

## Fall Conferences: Mark Your Calendars Now!

As many of you may know, the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) has moved back to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). In addition, the MDE has established a new Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA). The OEAA is comprised of four programs: (1) the MEAP, (2) the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program (which includes MI-Access), (3) the Assessment of English Language Learners (ELL) Program, and (4) the Accountability Program. The staff of all four programs are working together to provide Michigan schools the best possible service.

One of the first joint efforts involved surveying people in the field to see what content they would like covered during the 2004/2005 fall conferences. The OEAA would like to thank everyone who completed the survey; the feedback it received will be very helpful in planning the sessions.

One of the suggestions made in the survey was to hold the MEAP and MI-Access conferences together—at the

same times and places. Right now, however, there is so much information that MI-Access Coordinators need, that the OEAA believes MI-Access should have a full complement of conferences. Furthermore, because many MI-Access Coordinators are also MEAP Coordinators, combining the two conferences might not allow coordinators wearing both hats to attend all of the pertinent sessions. For that reason, the two conferences will be held separately this year.

MI-Access has, however, tried to schedule its fall conferences so they occur either the day before or the day after the OEAA's fall conferences. The one exception is the OEAA conference scheduled during the Learning Disabilities Association Conference. MI-Access did not want to conflict with another conference focusing on the special education population.

Following are the dates and locations for all of the OEAA's fall conferences (MEAP and MI-Access). Details on the specific sessions provided at these conferences will be included in the August issue of *The Assist*.

Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability Fall Conferences	
DATE	LOCATION
September 21	Marquette NMU
September 22	Grayling Holiday Inn
October 4	Lansing Center
October 13	Grand Rapids Crowne Plaza
October 18	Sterling Heights Sterling Inn
MI-Access Fall Conferences	
DATE	LOCATION
September 20	Marquette NMU
September 29	Lansing Center
October 12	Grand Rapids Crowne Plaza
October 19	Sterling Heights Sterling Inn

## GLOSSARY



**Content Standards:** Content standards, as identified in the *Michigan Curriculum Framework*, "are presented as models for the development of local district curriculum by the Michigan State Board of Education and the Michigan Department of Education. They represent rigorous expectations for student performance and describe the knowledge and abilities needed to be successful in today's society."

**Benchmarks:** While content standards describe what all students should know and be able to do in certain broad subject areas, benchmarks indicate what students should know and be able to do at various developmental levels (i.e., early elementary school, later elementary school, middle school, and high school) within the content standard.

**Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs):** While benchmarks indicate what students should know and be able to do at various developmental levels, grade level content expectations indicate what they should know and be able to do in specific grades (kindergarten through eighth grade).

**Field (or pilot) Test:** A test administration used to check the adequacy of testing procedures, generally including test administration, test responding, test scoring, and test reporting.

## Important MI-Access Dates

**Ship Phase 2.1 Item Tryout Materials to BETA/TASA  
NO LATER THAN June 14, 2004**

**Submit Coordinator Designations and Training  
Material Requests Online**

August 2 – September 17

### **MI-Access Conferences**

September 20 – Marquette NMU

September 29 – Lansing Center

October 12 – Grand Rapids Crowne Plaza

October 19 – Sterling Heights Sterling Inn

**Submit Estimated MI-Access Teacher/Student  
Counts to BETA/TASA**

October 1 – October 13

### **MI-Access 2004 Assessment Window**

February 21 – March 31, 2005



## Bookmark these Web sites:

**<http://www.k8accesscenter.org>**

(The Access Center)

**[www.nochildleftbehind.gov](http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov)**

**[www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)**

(Michigan Department of Education)

**[www.mi.gov/cepi](http://www.mi.gov/cepi)**

(Center for Educational Performance and Information)

**[www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access)**

(MI-Access Web Page)

**[www.mi-access.info](http://www.mi-access.info)**

(MI-Access Information Center)

**[www.mictm.org](http://www.mictm.org)**

(Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics)

This newsletter related to the assessment of students with disabilities is distributed to local and intermediate superintendents, directors of special education, MI-Access Coordinators, MEAP Coordinators, SEAC, Special Education monitors, MDE staff, school principals, Parent Advisory Committees, and institutes of higher education. *The Assist* may also be downloaded from the MI-Access Web page at: [www.mi.gov/mi-access](http://www.mi.gov/mi-access).

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